



## A Season of Light

### Advent and Christmas at Cross of Hope

**December 2 - Special Needs Christmas Party - 1-3 pm**

**December 3 - 1st Sunday of Advent - 9am and 10:45 am worship**

**December 9 - Preschool Christmas Program - 10am.**

**December 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent - 9am and 10:45am worship.**

**December 13 - Las Posadas - 5:30 - 7:30pm. (Information on page 6)**

**December 17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent - 9am and 10:45 am worship**

**December 24 - 4th Sunday of Advent - 10am worship with guests Surgite**

**December 24 - Nativity of our Lord - Christmas Eve Worship**

4pm- Children's Worship - Christmas songs and stories

6pm - Contemporary Worship with Praise + Team

8pm - Candlelight Service - Music with the Brass and Voices of Hope Choir

**December 25 - Nativity of our Lord - Christmas Day - 10am worship**

**December 31 - First Sunday of Christmas - 10am worship**

**Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School**

6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87120  
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*This Journal of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church is published each month for the enrichment of the mission ("Loving God • Transforming Relationships • Serving Others"), for the life of the people of God at Cross of Hope and our community.*

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**WE WANT YOUR NEWS ITEMS**

Deadline is 10th of the month for the following month's edition. Send E-mail articles to [office@crossofhope.org](mailto:office@crossofhope.org), [lbagby@crossofhope.org](mailto:lbagby@crossofhope.org), or deliver to church office.

**Stewardship**

Stewardship involves your time, talent and treasure. Contact the church office for assistance in getting started in any of our ministries. Please remember Cross of Hope in preparing your will.

**Cross of Hope School**



Butter Braids will arrive for pickup on December 13 beginning at 3:30.



Thank you for all of our donations to the Rio Grande Food Project. We were able to fill a truck with all of our donations.

The school's Christmas Vacation will be from December 16 through January 2.

**Currently accepting enrollment at Cross of Hope School.**

Please click on this link to begin our Online Registration process:

<https://ch-nm.client.renweb.com/oa/?memberid=2059>

Campus tours are available for those families interested in becoming more familiar with Cross of Hope School. To schedule a tour prior to registering your child/children, please contact Susan Rivera, Director of School Ministry at 505-897-1832 or email [esdirector@crossofhope.org](mailto:esdirector@crossofhope.org). We look forward to seeing you soon!

Cross of Hope School is a welcoming, Christ-centered community providing high quality education in a nurturing environment that respects each child's development.

**COH Communications Director Job Posting**

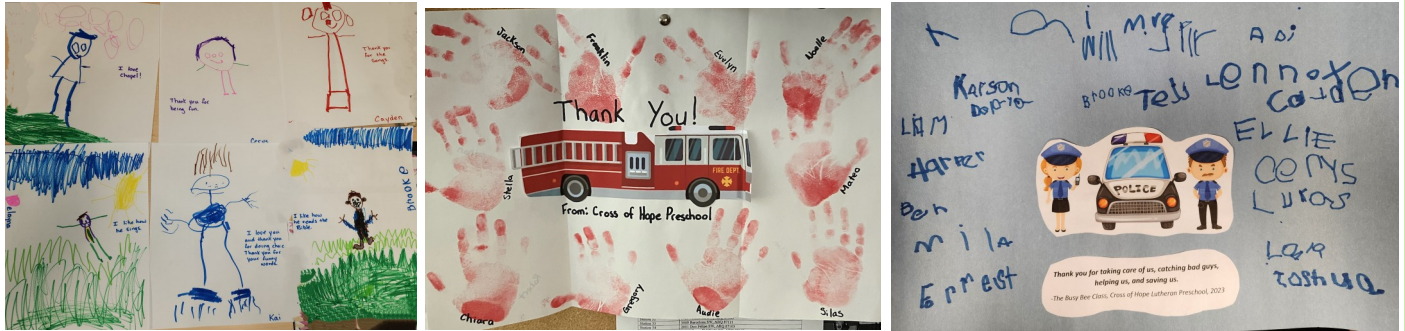
The Communications Director ensures effective communication across various platforms such as website, social media, email, newsletter, bulletin, PowerPoint, and others as appropriate for Cross of Hope Church and School.

[Click on this link for more information.](#)

School continued from page 2

# Cross of Hope School News

## COH Preschool Children Love Our Community



Each month the preschool chooses those in our community to thank for their service and making the place we live a beautiful and safe place to live. We want the children to connect with people who devote their lives and choose careers of service and help them understand the importance of community service. The month of September we thanked our very own Pastor Adam for teaching about God and the love of Jesus and choosing the path of service. In October we chose the Fire and Rescue Department to thank them for keeping us safe and helping us when we are in need. This month, November, we chose the Police, who dedicate their lives to protecting us and making our community a safe place to live. The children have loved creating cards to each community member or department and have a lot to say about each place and person we have reached out to. We have even got a response from the Fire department who have hung their card on their office door!

Delayna Says: "I pray for my daddy to be safe and happy and at bedtime he prays with me."

Brantley says: "Call them in emergencies and they spray the fire because its hot!"

Franklin says: "I like how firemen put out fires and help people. I'm a fire truck for Halloween, and it gets filled up with water."

Robbie says: "I like the siren and the horn, and the helmet."

Lukas: "My daddy is a police man and I want to thank him because he protects my mommy and my sister."

Lennox: "Thank you for putting criminals in jail and catching the guy who stole a purse and giving it back to the girl."

Brooke: "Thank you for helping us and putting the villains in jail."

**COH Preschool Christmas Program will be on December 9 at 10am.**



# Council Corner

by Margie Reed COH Council President

**“Unto us a child is born, to us a son is given – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)**

Looking back over the year, the Council has accomplished a great deal. Each month you can read the Council minutes on the bulletin board (by the office) or check out the Council Corner articles in the Rays of Hope newsletter, written by Council members, and available on-line.

Our November Council Meeting was held in a newly cleaned and organized conference room. It was so nice to sit around a table and be able to see everyone. Greg Morrison began the meeting with a moving devotional that touched us all.

We said goodbye to two retiring Council members. Pat Benchik was President for four plus years and brought so much knowledge and an understanding of running a business. Pat is still serving as the Property Manager and continues to work with vendors to keep the property in good shape. Kathy Gorman served on the Council for two years plus an extension when we were waiting for a Congregational meeting to elect new members. Kathy continues to be a member of the Outreach Ministry during that time and continues to set up COH participation in blood drives and Special Olympic programs to name a few.

Both Pat and Kathy were presented with a beautiful cross for their service on the Council, from the COH Council and the Congregation. Pat is still serving as the Property Manager and continues to work with vendors to keep the property in good shape.

Susan Rivera, Director of Schools, gave an update on the school, and on the fundraiser held in November (Butter Braids). It was a success, and, more than likely, be on the calendar for next year. Profits from the fundraisers are used to purchase needed items for the school.

Since the preschool is accredited, they are able to apply for grants. Courtney Knutilla, Director of Preschool, submitted detailed information regarding two preschool grants they recently received: Focus Planning Time Grant and the Childcare Assistance Grant.

Pastor suggested the Council gather together in January for a retreat. It would give us the opportunity to discuss the contents of the Leadership Guide as well as focus on other important information needed by the Council members to support the Church and School.

- The Communications Director job opening has been posted. Nancy Morrison is handling the Media projects for us.
- The Media Director, Music Director, and the Service Streaming service now share one office.

In addition to all of the above, Poinsettias have been ordered (25) and a signup sheet is in the Great Hall. Our Christmas candlelight service will be blessed with new candles, and we have a new Christmas manger for baby Jesus thanks to Bob Reed.

The Council wishes you a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and Peace, Love, and Good Health in the New Year.



**The Mission of Cross of Hope Faith Connections Group**  
 To provide an opportunity for all people to share Christ's love and authentic community in a small group setting where lives are transformed through growth in faith and service to others.

COH Small Group Ministry

## A Season of Light

Cross of Hope Worship and Small Group Series



“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it!” John 1:5

The season of Advent prepares us for the good news of God’s revealing Jesus, the light of the world. The world waits in longing and expectation for the coming of God’s light. In our baptismal service a candle is given as a reminder for each of us to be light bearers throughout our lives. Words of encouragement are shared from Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” The light of God shines directly through the ways we love God by demonstrating love for others each day.

Join with us as we explore and grow together in worship, study and response in this season of light.

### A Season of Light

Advent: Longing for the Light

12/3/2023	Advent 1	<b>Waiting</b>	Mark 13:24-37
12/10/2023	Advent 2	<b>Preparing</b>	Mark 1:1-8
12/17/2023	Advent 3	<b>Longing</b>	John 1:6-8, 19-28
12/24/2023	Advent 4	<b>Hoping</b>	Luke 1:26-38

Christmas: The Light of the World...

12/24/2023	Christmas Eve	<b>Welcomed</b>	Luke 2:1-20
12/25/2023	Christmas Day	<b>Welcomed</b>	John 1: 1014
12/31/2023	First Sunday of Christmas	<b>Embraced</b>	Luke 2:22-40

**Open group meetings:** Sunday’s 9:45am and Wednesday’s 6:30pm

Talk with Pastor Russ Sorensen about other available time options at [r2csorensen@gmail.com](mailto:r2csorensen@gmail.com) or (505) 400-8206

If you are interested in being part of a small group, contact the church office at (505) 897-0047, ext. 102 or Pastor Russ

# Camp @ COH and Youth @ COH

## Las Posadas Is Coming!

November was a busy month for our youth campers. We were and continue to be using the Camp@CoH time to prep for our annual Las Posadas event. For those not familiar with the event, here are some details.

On December 13, Cross of Hope re-enacts the journey Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem. It is a tradition in Hispanic cultures to travel to various places seeking shelter. We do this re-enactment on our property and ask our youth and school children to play various roles as we journey. At the end of the journey, we pause and reflect at the manger in Bethlehem.

We want to invite you to join us on this journey this year. Our church community will gather at 5:30 to travel from inn to inn and ending up at the manger. We will then all join in the great hall to enjoy some delicious food, sing carols, and visit with each other. Our celebration of Christ's birth includes mariachi's, live donkeys, actors in costumes, and a fiesta including enchiladas, posole, biscochitos, and a piñata.

You are also invited to be a part of this re-enactment in a variety of ways.

You can:

- Attend and be a part of the procession from inn to inn.
- Provide food for our meal. Click [here on the link.](#)

Dress warmly, bring a flashlight and camera for pictures. Bring your wonder and sense of joy as we anticipate and celebrate Christ's birth with this living nativity presentation.





## Heart Strings

*Members of COH unable to worship with us on a regular basis. Please contact and let them know we care.*

- Kevin Benhem 1
- Noelle Kouri 2
- Art Kavanaugh 5
- Terry Caipen 7
- Luke Walter 8
- Lynne Bagby 8
- Beth Christians 8
- Ann Martin 9
- Star Cooley 10
- Linda Willoughby 11
- Kathy Branson 11
- Susan Rivera 11
- Rowynn Adams 13
- Addy Berndt 15
- Jericho Adams 16
- Laurie Adams 17
- Karen Hawley 18
- Ed Christians 19
- Erin Hielkema 20
- Carol Wirths 20
- Vicki Bachman 21
- Jason Adams 27
- John Curtin 31
- Martha Hughes 31

**Dale and Edee Bauer**  
4905 Wagon Mound Trail NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120

**John Fries**  
Gardens - Retreat Villas  
Assisted Living  
4100 Jackie Road SE, #15  
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

**Karen Reiten**  
899-1504  
4841 Shin Avenue NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144

**Carroll Werling**  
Palmilla Senior Living  
10301 Golf Course Rd NW  
Apt 144  
Albuquerque, NM 87120



	<u>Day</u>	<u>Years Married</u>
John and Susan McWilliam	4	41
Jerry and Laura Burton	8	33
David and Karen Wilson	27	43
Ron and Carol Wirths	28	49
Tanya and Steve Zynda	30	28



# Banner Babes' Tea

This year's Banner Babe's Tea ,“Food for the Soul”, fed guests with more than just something for their palates. As is always the norm, the affair was a glorious success. Guests enjoyed a variety of teas, delicious delicacies, stunning sweets, beautiful music and a grand fashion show.



Photos courtesy of Florence Begay

# Luther House Fundraiser



Please join Luther House for their annual "Christmas Cheers" Sing-Along and Fundraiser! It will be a fun afternoon of singing Christmas carols, playing games, and winning amazing prizes! If you can't attend the fundraiser, you can still purchase raffle tickets to participate in our 50/50 Raffle by going to this website [go.rallyup.com/335c4e](http://go.rallyup.com/335c4e) or scanning the QR code in the Fundraiser link to your left. You don't have to be present to win!

# Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Wednesday, December 6 at 1:00 pm.

Lunch will be at BJ's Restaurant right outside of Cottonwood Mall 10000 Coors Blvd..

Reservations may be made by calling Leon Carrico (505-554-1128) or by sending an email to ([leoncarrico@gmail.com](mailto:leoncarrico@gmail.com)) by December 4th.







# The Happy Hope-r Amy Ellis



By Mary Bresnahan

**Birthdate:** October 20, 1973

**Birthplace:** Anchorage, Alaska

**Occupation:** Dual language teacher

**Marital Status:** Single

**Hobbies:** Music, reading (spy novels and thrillers), outdoors

**Degree:** BA Political Science and Spanish from Eastern University of New Mexico, 1994: Bachelor of Education from University of Alaska in Anchorage, 1997

Amy's Parents are Earl and Sara. She has one brother who lives in Philadelphia. Earl was born in Wilcox, AZ and moved to Eugene OR where he had a small farm, and later to Santa Cruz CA. He went to Cal Berkeley for his Civil Engineer degree. He worked for the Core of Engineers and helped build the Alaska pipeline and later built and maintained structures for the federal government. He also worked for the State of Alaska Department of Transportation as a soils specialist. He always liked to experience new things. He designed and helped build her childhood home in Anchorage. Now he lives in Reno, NV.

Amy's mother Sara passed away 15 years ago. While she was ill, she and Earl drove to UCLA for treatments so Reno, NV fit the bill as an affordable place to live. Sara went to Alaska to teach and that is where she met Earl. She taught Spanish and ESL (English as a Second Language) at the high school level. Once she and Earl married, she stayed home to raise the children. When Amy was a junior in high school Sara went back to work. She taught full-time but didn't enjoy it, so went back to being a substitute teacher. She influenced Amy to learn a second language. When it was time to go to college, Amy was offered a couple academic scholarships – one in Iowa and one at Eastern New Mexico University. Since the latter was a better offer, and provided more opportunities to practice Spanish, it made more sense to accept. She had a dual major in Political Science and Spanish. Additionally, she fell in love with New Mexico's beauty and outdoor opportunities.

Over time Amy found she no longer cared about the Political Science part of her bachelor's degree, but she cared about the Spanish. Her father encouraged her to become a Spanish teacher. Amy taught middle school Spanish in Anchorage for three years. She came back to New Mexico in 2001 to teach Dual Language, and she stayed. She has been in four different elementary schools and currently teaches first-grade. She is now at Villa Vista Elementary in the South Valley and has been there for ten years. She teaches all the first-grade content spending 50% of the day teaching in Spanish and 50% of the day teaching in English.

Amy's brother, Arthur, works for Boeing on government defense contracts. He has worked on the V22, Osprey and the Chinook helicopter.

Amy continued from page 9

Amy mentioned her dad had a pilot’s license and would fly them around Alaska. As the family grew in physical size, he upgraded his airplane to accommodate everyone. They would fly to different places to camp and fish. A lot of this explains Amy’s love of the outdoors. She just likes to be outside. She runs sprints (on the grass) and lifts weights (kettlebells). She is perfectly content to grab a book and read outside. She likes to help a friend grow sprouts and sell them at the Los Ranchos Grower’s Market. Amy tries to eat as naturally and cleanly as possible. Good thing she likes to cook.

Amy’s stepmother, Diane, is a retired nurse who worked for the Veteran’s Administration. She now works part-time as a school nurse and helps in the Pre-k classes at a local Christian school in Reno.

As we all know, Amy is a wonderful musician. Amy gives piano lessons. She had multiple students pre-COVID but now has only one.

The burning question for Amy was about going barefoot. She started this when she was 30 years old. Of course, during the summer in Alaska she went barefoot. When she came to New Mexico someone introduced her to “earthing” or “grounding,” which is having your skin in contact with the earth. It helps your circadian rhythms and restores your connection between the body and the electrical currents of the earth. When you go barefoot you engage the muscles of the feet. It creates a healthier balance. It took a while before she went barefoot all the time. She does wear flip-flops most places but takes them off as soon as possible. She said she does own a pair of “minimalist” shoes she uses in places where there are rocks.

When asked if the children at school ask her about being barefoot, she said “no”. They are so used to it that they don’t question her anymore. She does not let her students take off their shoes because she knows some parents would object.

Amy got to Cross of Hope via a friend who had a child in the Preschool. The friend invited Amy to come to the children’s Christmas performance and Las Posadas. At the time Amy was an accompanist at Catholic church in town. She contacted Richard, our former music Director, inquiring if there was a need for an accompanist. Richard took her name in case there ever was a need for a substitute. The accompanist was stretched a bit too thin, so Richard asked Amy if she would be willing to do one service. That was 16 years ago. Amy said Cross of Hope has “a unique feel; a warmth.” I think we can all agree about that.

We all know what a gift Amy is to us. I am sure she can tell you more about Alaska and “earthing”.

## Angel Tree

COH has partnered with Albuquerque Public School Homeless Project 2023 this year for our annual Angel Tree Community Outreach.

We will be working with seven families this year. If you would like to donate or have questions, please contact Denny Perkins at (505)321-5549, or email [samyanddr@hotmail.com](mailto:samyanddr@hotmail.com).



**When you need these services, please think of Rays of Hope sponsors. We thank them for their continued support in offsetting the costs (by \$10 per month) associated with producing Rays of Hope each month.**

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 Congregational Council Team**  
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Pastor Adam Berndt, Margie Reed- President, Sherrie Simek- Vice President, Janet Conlon-Secretary, Bob Arseneau, Linda Ehlers, Tim Fuller, Greg Morrison, Kristi Valdez, and Ron Wirths

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**SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
 OF ALBUQUERQUE**

**CHRISTMAS 2023 CONCERT**  
**CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA SPECTACULAR!**

**Conductor: John Yuan**

**LEROY ANDERSON: SLEIGH RIDE**  
**A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL**  
**CHRISTMAS CAROLS SING-ALONG**  
**O HOLY NIGHT**  
**WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS**  
**CAROL OF THE BELLS**  
 (arr. by Giovanni Galassini)  
**AND MORE!**

**December 10, Sunday, 2:00 pm**  
**Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church**  
**8600 Academy, NE**

**December 17, Sunday, 2:30 pm**  
**St. John XXIII Catholic Community Church**  
**4831 Tramway Ridge Drive, NE**

**Susan Rivera, Director of School Ministry**  
**Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School**




6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW  
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**Courtney Knutilla, Preschool Director**  
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**Cross of Hope Care Outreach**


Transportation  
 Medical Appointments  
 Other Appointments  
 Necessary Errands



Emergency Meals  
 Family Emergency  
 Illness  
 Death

**Assistance is available:**

- [www.crossofhope.org/forms](http://www.crossofhope.org/forms)
- Email: [care@crossofhope.org](mailto:care@crossofhope.org)
- In the Great Hall
- Call COH office (505)897-0047x102



**CROSS OF HOPE**  
 Church & School  
 Love • Transform • Serve

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Mission Statement**

Cross of Hope is a Spirit-centered community that shares Christ's love through worship, education and outreach to develop and strengthen relationships with God.

 Rev. R. Adam Berndt, Pastor

505-897-0047 • [office@crossofhope.org](mailto:office@crossofhope.org)  
[www.crossofhope.org](http://www.crossofhope.org)

Facebook Page: Cross of Hope Church

**Worship Times:**

On-Site Sunday - 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday - 10:45 a.m.  
Digital: Sunday: 9:00 a.m.

Devotions: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.

## December Book Suggestions

Recommended by Dee Gutierrez

### **The True Jesus - Uncovering the Divinity of Christ in the Gospels- David Limbaugh**

Who do you say that I am?" Uttered by Jesus Christ, this profound question has presented an age-old challenge to believers, skeptics, scholars, and rulers. In attempting to answer this question, The True Jesus goes straight to the unimpeachable source: the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

### **A Christmas Memory - Richard Paul Evans**

In A Christmas Memory, Richard Paul Evans (#1 New York Times bestselling author and the "King of Christmas fiction") delves deep into his childhood memories to take readers back to an age when his world felt like it was falling apart, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the light of hope can still shine.

### **A Plain and Simple Christmas - Amy Clipston**

A book filled with love, the pain of being separated from ones family, and the determination to follow Gods will regardless of the outcome, A Plain and Simple Christmas is an inspiring page-turner that will keep you guessing what happens next right to the very last page.